

Sunday 4 May 2025

**Bill Quay Fire: Statement from Pelaw and Heworth Ward Councillors**

Local councillors Amanda Wintcher, Ian Patterson and Paul Diston share our community's sadness about the tragedy that occurred in Bill Quay on Friday evening. Our thoughts are especially with Layton's family and friends.

We have been in touch with residents about concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at Fairfield Industrial estate and the former Harrison's slipway site nearby for some time. We have raised issues with Securitas, Gateshead Council, the Fire Service and Northumbria Police. Some actions have been taken but unfortunately, the pieces did not come together in time to prevent this awful incident.

Reported issues have included:

- (1) A broken fence panel along the side of the warehouse at Fairfield reported to the Council by Councillor Wintcher on February 27. She was not able to get through on the Securitas number posted on the fence when she attempted to report this the day before. The missing panels had been blocked up by March 5.
- (2) A resident contacted Councillor Patterson to report youth disorder on April 7. Councillor Patterson later visited the Harrison's slipway site to investigate. The resident advised that the Police had also responded to their report.
- (3) On April 14 Councillor Wintcher reported a fire in the Fairfield estate following a resident report.
- (4) On April 22 Councillor Patterson emailed Community Safety at the Council and Northumbria Police to alert them to the increase in anti-social behaviour. The Police reported back that they would start to include the area in anti-social behaviour patrols. On April 28 Council officers assured him that the issue would be raised at a Multi-Agency Operational Planning Meeting due to take place that week.
- (5) On April 23 Councillor Wintcher reported more broken fence panels to the Council and these were blocked up soon after. She also reported the rise in anti-social behaviour and damage at the Fairfields site and Harrison's slipway to Northumbria Police and suggested that they set up a community meeting to enable the Police to hear directly from residents.

Throughout this time councillors were visiting the site to check for any issues, most recently on April 30.

**ENDS**